

The BOYS' FRIEND

TWELVE PAGES! TWENTY-SIXTH YEAR!

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THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending April 3rd, 1920.]

"RODNEY STONE."—By SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE.



By
SIR ARTHUR
CONAN DOYLE

THE GREAT FIGHT! Sir Charles Tregellis' Champion Enters the Ring.

(For Opening Chapters turn to next page.)

The Ringside.

Out of the whole of that vast multitude I was one of the very few who had observed whence it was that this black hat, skimming so opportunely over the ropes, had come. I have already remarked that when we looked around us there had been a single gig travelling very rapidly upon the southern road.

My uncle's eyes had rested upon it, but his attention had been drawn away by the discussion between Sir Lothian Hume and the referee upon the question of time. For my own part, I had been so struck by the furious manner in which these belated travellers were approaching, that I had continued to watch them with all sorts of vague hopes within me, which

I did not dare to put into words, for fear of adding to my uncle's disappointments.

I had just made out that the gig contained a man and a woman, when suddenly I saw it swerve off the road, and come, with a galloping horse and bounding wheels, right across the moor, crashing through the gorse-bushes, and sinking down to the hubs in the heather and bracken. As the driver pulled up his foam-spattered horse he threw the reins to his companion, sprang from his seat, butted furiously into the crowd, and then an instant afterwards up went the hat which told of his challenge and defiance.

"There is no hurry now, I presume, Craven," said my uncle, as coolly as if this sudden effect had been carefully devised by him.

"Now that your man has his hat in the ring you can take as much time as you like, Sir Charles."

"Your nephew has certainly cut it rather fine, nephew."

"It is not Jim, sir," I whispered.

"It is someone else."

My uncle's eyebrows betrayed his astonishment.

"Someone else!" he ejaculated.

"And a good man, too!" roared Belcher, slapping his thigh with a crack like a pistol-shot. "Why, blow my dickey if it ain't old Jack Harrison himself!"

Looking down at the crowd, we had seen the head and shoulders of a powerful and strenuous man moving slowly forward, and leaving behind him a long V-shaped ripple upon its surface, like the wake of a swimming dog.

Now, as he pushed his way through the looser fringe the head was raised, and there was the grinning, hardy face of the smith looking up at us. He had left his hat in the ring, and was enveloped in an overcoat with a

blue bird's-eye handkerchief tied round his neck. As he emerged from the throng he let his great-coat fly loose, and showed that he was dressed in his full fighting kit—black draws, chocolate stockings, and white shoes.

"I'm right sorry to be so late, Sir Charles!" he cried. "I'd have been sooner, but it took me a little time to make it all straight with the missus. I couldn't convince her all at once, an' so I brought her with me, and we argued it out on the way."

Looking at the gig, I saw that it was indeed Mrs. Harrison who was seated in it. Sir Charles beckoned him up to the wheel of the curricule.

"What in the world brings you here, Harrison?" he whispered. "I am as glad to see you as ever I was to see a man in my life, but I confess that I did not expect you."

"Well, sir, you heard I was coming," said the smith.

"Indeed, I did not!"

"Didn't you get a message, Sir Charles, from a man named Cumming, landlord of the Friar's Oak Inn? Mister Rodney, there, would know him."

"We saw him dead drunk at the George."

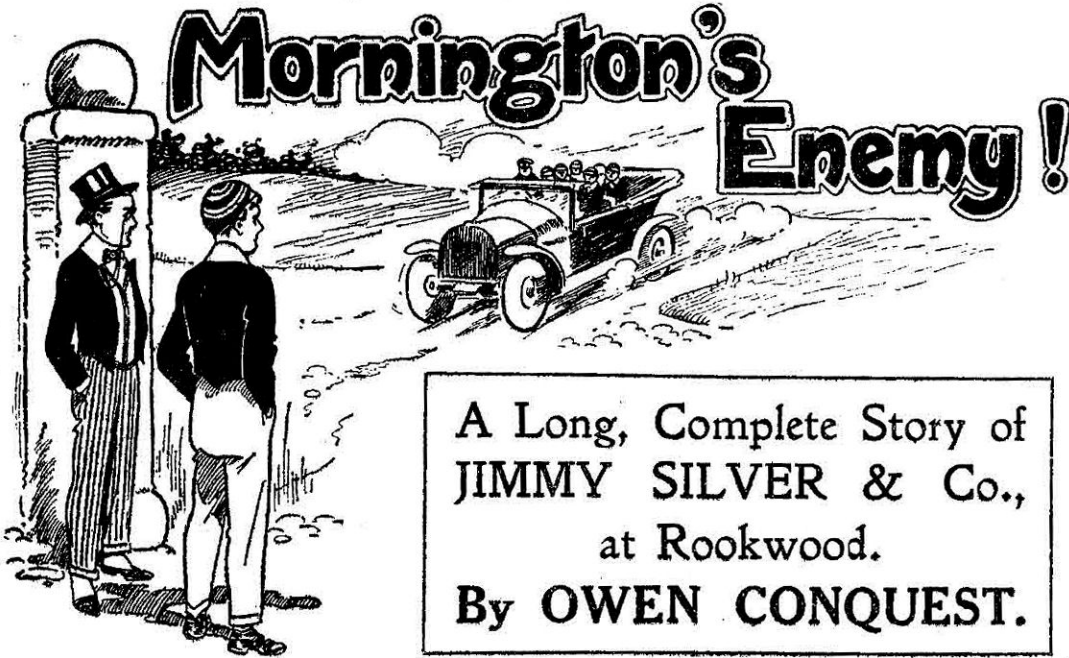
"There, now, if I wasn't afraid of it!" cried Harrison angrily. "He's always like that when he's excited, and I never saw a man more off his head than he was when he heard I was going to take this job over. He brought a bag of sovereigns up with him to back me with."

"That's how the betting got turned," said my uncle. "He found others to follow his lead, it appears."

"I was so afraid that he might get upon the drink that I made him promise to go straight to you, sir, the very instant he should arrive. He had a note to deliver."

"I understand that he reached the George at six, whilst I did not return

OUR SPLENDID, COMPLETE SCHOOL STORY.



A Long, Complete Story of
JIMMY SILVER & Co.,
at Rookwood.
By **OWEN CONQUEST.**

The 1st Chapter. Painful for Peele.

"You blokes—"
"Eh?"
"—I mean, you chaps—" stammered Arthur Beresford-Baggs, the new junior in the Fourth Form at Rookwood School.
Jimmy Silver & Co. smiled. They really couldn't help it.
The four juniors were chatting in the quadrangle at Rookwood when the new fellow came up. His manner was very friendly, and the Fistical Four were quite cordial in return. But there was a certain limit fixed upon their cordiality. Arthur Beresford-Baggs was the son of a munition millionaire, and he was simply rolling in money, and the Fistical Four were rather chary of being counted among the mercenary youths who were making themselves exceedingly nice to Arthur on account of the paternal money-bags.
Indeed, Mornington of the Fourth had announced his intention of "cutting" the new bouncer, as Morny called him; but Jimmy Silver & Co. did not see that. Certainly Arthur was reeking with money, but otherwise he seemed a very harmless and good-natured fellow, and the Co. kindly determined to give him a chance. But they were very anxious not to be counted in with Peele & Co. of the Fourth and Tubby Muffin.
"You—you chaps—" said Arthur.
"—I meant to say you chaps, you know. Did I say blokes?"
"You did!" grinned Jimmy Silver.
"Now, I wonder," said Arthur, "what made me say blokes?"
Jimmy Silver & Co. did not wonder.
They had already observed certain signs and traces about the hopeful son of the millionaire which hinted that his earlier training had not been in the circles of Vere do Vere.
But that really was not against him. As Raby had tolerantly remarked, everybody couldn't be born with a silver spoon in his mouth. And if poverty was a crime, it was a crime of which the Beresford-Baggs family had repented, that was certain.
"I wonder!" repeated Arthur, looking uneasily from one to another of the Fistical Four. "However, I was going to say to you blokes—I mean, you fellows, that I'm going to have a car out this afternoon."
"Lucky bargee!" said Lovell.
"I'm taking out a little party," said Arthur, beaming. "My study-mates are coming—Towny and Topy, you know. I'd like you fellows to come, too."
"Oh!"
"We're going on a long run, right down by the sea," said Arthur. "Stopping at a swanky hotel for some grub, too. My treat, you know. I really wish you fellows would come."
"Room for a crowd in your car?" asked Newcome.
"Oh, lots!"
"H'm!" murmured Jimmy Silver. A spin in a big car on a sunny afternoon was by no means an unpleasant prospect, even with the company of Townsend and Topham thrown in. But—There was a but. In the distance in the quad Jimmy Silver was eyeing the little group with a sour eye. Peele was evidently looking upon them as rivals

for the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. Cyril Peele's opinion was not much to be regarded; but there were others.
"Like to come?" asked Arthur, perhaps a little perplexed by the hesitation of the Fistical Four.
"Well, it would be ripping," said Jimmy Silver.
"Yes, wouldn't it just?"
"It's really very kind of you to ask us, too."
"Not at all!" said Arthur, with another beaming smile. "Fact is, I should like you fellows to come."
"Do Towny and Topy know you're asking us," said Lovell.
"Eh? No! I suppose I can ask anybody I like."
"Certainly. It's a free country," said Jimmy Silver. "Well, you fellows, I suppose Towny and Topy can stand us, if we can stand them."
"I should think so," grinned Raby.
"H'm!"
Owing to their keen desire not to be counted among the toadies the Fistical Four would have preferred to decline the invitation, attractive as it was. But the new junior was so unsuspecting and so friendly that they hated to hurt his feelings by a refusal. It was possible to carry independence to the extent of ungraciousness, and Jimmy Silver & Co. naturally did not want to do that.
"You'll come?" asked Arthur, blissfully unconscious of the thoughts that were passing through the minds of the four juniors.
"Yes, kid, if you want us."
"Good!" said Arthur. "The car will be here at half-past two."
"We'll be ready."
"Right you are!"
And with a friendly nod Arthur Beresford-Baggs sauntered away towards the School House.
Jimmy Silver & Co. exchanged glances that did not express complete satisfaction.
"May as well go," said Jimmy at length. "He's not a bad chap, and I don't see why we should hurt his feelings by being stand-offish. Morny has been insulting to him, and we don't want to be like that. But—"
"But?" said Lovell.
"There's a merry 'but,'" said Jimmy Silver. "Still, it won't hurt for this once. We'll go."
"Oh, yes!"
Cyril Peele came across to the Fistical Four, with an exceedingly unpleasant expression on his face. Peele had been one of the keenest competitors for the friendship of the new junior, but he had not had much luck so far. Townsend and Topham had captured him, so to speak, and they were doing their best to keep off rivals in the field. During the few days Arthur had been at Rookwood, Peele had found himself kept at arm's length. It was very annoying to Cyril Peele to see the Fistical Four, without an effort on their part, succeeding where he had failed.
"So you're after him, too!" was Peele's sneering remark as he came up.
Jimmy Silver & Co. fixed their eyes upon Peele.
"What does that mean?" asked Jimmy very quietly.
Peele's lip curved.
"You're going in his car this afternoon?" he asked.
"Yes; he asked us."
"That's what you've been buttering him up for!"

"We haven't been buttering him up, and we don't care twopence about his car, Peele."
"Gammon!"
"You don't believe that?"
"No fear! You're after his money, like Towny and Topy, and Tubby Muffin, and Smythe of the Shell, and— Yaroooooh!"
Cyril Peele broke off, with a loud yell, as the Fistical Four closed round him, and four pairs of hands were laid upon him. The chums of the Fourth were angry.
"So you can't take our word?" asked Arthur Edward Lovell grimly. "Tap his napper on the tree, you chaps!"
"Tap, tap!"
Peele howled as his "napper" came into contact with the trunk of a big beech.
"Yoop! Leggo! Oh!"
"Take our word now?" asked Jimmy Silver.
"Oh, you rotters—"
"Tap, tap, tap!"
"Leggo!" shrieked Peele. "I—I—I take your word, of—of course. Yaroooh!"
"That's better!" said Jimmy Silver. "Don't you play Doubting Thomas where we are concerned, Peele. It's likely to give you a pain in the top-knot. Sit him down."
Cyril Peele was sat down, with a bump, at the foot of the beech. The Fistical Four walked away and left him there, gasping for breath and rubbing his head. Whether Peele's doubts had been dissolved or not it was certain that he repented of giving utterance to them.
"The measly worm!" growled Lovell, as the chums of the Fourth strolled away. "I supposed that's what he would think!"
"It looks—" began Raby, and paused.
"Well?"
"Dash it all, I wish we hadn't arranged to go around with young Baggs!" said Raby uneasily. "It does look a bit— Well, I'm afraid that more decent chaps than Peele may think the same as he does."
"Bother 'em!" said Jimmy Silver.
"Anyhow, we're booked now," said Lovell. "Dash it all, we can be civil to the chap, even if he is oozing tenners! We don't want any of his dashed tenners!"
"But fellows may think—" "Blow them!"
Jimmy Silver & Co. were not feeling satisfied. But, as Lovell had said, they were booked now, and if their action was misunderstood in the Fourth, it couldn't be helped.

The 2nd Chapter. Confidential!

"This here is prime!"
Arthur Beresford-Baggs made that remark to himself.
He had gone to his study after dinner, and was standing at the window, looking out.
The window gave a view of part of the old green quadrangle of Rookwood and a strip of the playing-fields; with the woods beyond in the distance, just showing the green of spring.
Certainly it was a very pleasant view; indeed, it was "prime," as Arthur remarked; though "prime" was not much in use at Rookwood as a descriptive epithet.
Arthur's chubby face was very cheerful.
His lines had fallen in pleasant

places, so far, at the old school. It was possible that the munition millionaire's son had arrived with some lurking doubts in his breast. If so, they had been removed. Nothing could have exceeded the cordiality of his welcome.
Probably he did not know how much of the cordiality to attribute to his superabundant cash. Indeed, it would have been difficult for him to suppose that well-dressed, gentlemanly fellows like Townsend and Topham could be thinking of his money. And, to do them justice, Towny and Topy were not wholly mercenary. Arthur's ample cash certainly pre-disposed them in his favour; but he was a likeable fellow, and they persuaded themselves that they liked him for his own qualities, too.
Assuredly, his training had not been so lofty and select as that of his new aristocratic friends. There were only too many traces of that. Once or twice he had made them shudder. But Towny and Topy had tolerantly decided that they could "stand" him; indeed, they hoped that their select society would end by improving him. Their motives were mixed; but undoubtedly Arthur found them very agreeable, and was glad to drop so easily into a friendly circle at the big, strange school.
"Prime!" he repeated. "Jest prime! I certainly never knowed how prime it was going to be!"
There was a step in the doorway, and Arthur turned quickly from the window. He had been muttering aloud; and he was conscious that when he was off his guard his speech betrayed him. Even three years with an expensive tutor at home had not quite eliminated from Arthur's speech certain peculiarities that were not likely to find favour at Rookwood.
It was Rawson who came in. He had a big Liddell and Scott under his arm, which he had borrowed from Jimmy Silver. The scholarship junior could not afford a big Liddell and Scott on "his own." He nodded pleasantly to Arthur, giving no sign of having heard his muttered remarks.
"Hallo!" said Arthur. "You working this afternoon?"
"Yes; I'm going to have a dig at Greek," answered Rawson. "You needn't mind me, if you're staying in the study."
"Not me!" said Arthur, promptly and ungrammatically. "I say, you haven't got to work, have you?"
"Not exactly got to," said Rawson, with a smile. "I'm working for the Greek prize this term."
"Oh, my eye!" said Arthur. "Rather you than me!"
He eyed Rawson, as the latter sat down with his books and a sheaf of foolscap.
"Look here," said Arthur. "You chuck that up this afternoon, and come out in my car!"
Rawson shook his head.
"Wouldn't you like to come?" asked Arthur. "Lots of room. I've told 'em to send the biggest car in the garage at Rookham."
"My hat! That will run you into a pretty bill!" said Rawson, opening his eyes.
Arthur grinned.
"That don't matter," he said. "I've lots of oof—lots! And if I run out, I've only got to write to father—I mean the pater. Besides, father's—I mean, the pater's—opened an account at Rookham Garage, so that I can telephone for a car whenever I want one."
"It must be jolly nice to be as rich as that!" said Rawson, rather wistfully, though quite without envy.
Arthur nodded gleefully.
"I can tell you it's topping!" he said. "Bit of a change for us, and no mistake!"
"Oh! You weren't always rich?"
Arthur hesitated.
"Well, p'raps not always as rich as we are now," he said cautiously, evidently feeling that he had said a little too much. "But our family was always distinguished, father says. We're Beresfords, you know, so father—the pater took on the name when he was made a baronet. I desay you know my father—pater is a baronet."
"I've heard so," assented Rawson smiling.
"Your folks rich?" asked Arthur.
"No fear. Poor."
Arthur Beresford-Baggs opened his eyes wide.
"I didn't know there was any poor blokes—I mean chaps—at this here school," he said.
"Very few," answered Rawson. "I was lucky enough to get a scholarship here, or I couldn't have come."
"What's your father, then?" asked Arthur curiously.

"A workman."
"My eye! I say—" Arthur hesitated, and then spoke confidentially. "I don't mind tellin' you, Rawson, we ain't always been what we are now. You'd ardy believe, seeing me, that I'd ever swep' out a shop, would you?"
"You certainly look as if you'd got on since," said Rawson.
"Course, I don't want you to tell all the blokes; but you wouldn't do that," said Arthur.
"Not at all."
"Fact is, I rather like 'aving somebody to speak to," said Arthur, his speech, as he proceeded, becoming less and less that of a Beresford and more and more that of a Baggs.
"Course, this 'ere is tip-top, and father says I'm a gentleman now, and am to behave as such. Are you a gentleman, Rawson?"
"Oh! I—I hope so."
"Why not?" said Arthur. "Tain't what a chap's born, but what he is ain't it?"
Arthur was growing quite confidential now. The discovery that one of his study-mates was poor, and not at all lofty, seemed to afford him some relief. Possibly the grandeur of the Beresford-Baggs was, at times, a little oppressive to a youth who had once enjoyed the freedom and casiness of a mere Baggs. Certainly Arthur was talking now as he would not have ventured to talk to Towny or Topy; and it was evident that he found relief in it.
"That's it," assented Rawson, watching his new study-mate with some curiosity.
"We're rich now," pursued Arthur. "Fair rolling in it! All the same"—here he actually winked—"all the same, I don't go much on the Beresford branch. I never 'eard of any old Beresfords before we made our money. We was Baggses, jest Baggses."
"Oh!"
"And it ain't all lavender!" pursued Arthur. "F'instance, shakin' off relations what has always been good to a kid: I don't 'old with it. Course, father knows best; but it seems to me rather 'ard. I s'pose he's right, and it wouldn't do for Uncle William to come alone 'ere with his fish-barrer."
"Oh!"
"But Uncle Bill is a good sort, I can tell you; and we was glad to 'ave some fish off his barrer when I was a nipper. Then there's Aunt Sarah—she's a good old sort! Many and many a time she give me a 'penny when I wanted one, in the old days."
"My dear chap," said Rawson quietly, "don't you think you're talking a bit too freely? I'm not asking you questions, you know."
"Oh, you won't split!" said Arthur.
"Won't what? Oh, you mean I won't tell! Certainly I won't! I wouldn't talk like that to Towny and Topy, though!"
Arthur winked again.
"Wot!" he answered. "But you're all right; you won't give a bloke away. I tell you, I get a bit tired of it sometimes; it's been jest like play-actin' ever since we made our money. I'm going to be Beresford to Towny and Topy; but I don't mind being jest Baggs to you, 'cause we're much of a muchness—see?"
Rawson laughed.
"Now, you come out in the car with us this afternoon," said Arthur. "I'd really like you to come!"
"I'm afraid Towny and Topy wouldn't!" said Rawson.
Arthur nodded comprehensively.
"I've noticed that they seem a bit down on you," he said. "They don't like poor blokes—what?"
"They don't!"
"Never mind; you come all the same. It's my car, you know—I can do as I like, and 'ave who I like—"
"I'll stick to swotting, I think, thanks all the same!" said Rawson.
"Hallo, here are your pals for you!"
Townsend and Topham came into the study. They did not glance at Tom Rawson; the nuts of the Fourth generally made it a point to ignore Rawson's existence as much as possible. But they bestowed the most agreeable smiles and nods upon the heir of Sir Japhet Beresford-Baggs.
"The car's comin' in, old top!" said Townsend. "Come along!"
"Certainly, dear boy!" answered Master Beresford-Baggs, with a startling change from his tone and manner with Rawson.
And he left the study with his nutty friends. Once more he was Beresford, and Baggs was in the background.

The 3rd Chapter. Not Nice!

"Where's Jimmy Silver?"
"Eh?"
"Jimmy Silver!"

Townsend and Topham exchanged a glance.

"What do you want Jimmy Silver for?" asked Townsend.

"He's comin', with his friends!" explained Arthur. "I've asked them."

"Oh! I was thinkin' of suggestin' some friends of ours—"

"I've asked them!"

There was an unexpected firmness in Arthur's manner, and the two nuts, after another exchange of glances, decided that it was necessary to give the millionaire's son his head.

"They're in the quad, I think," said Topham. "This way!"

Peele & Co. were hanging about the passage; but Topham and Topy hurried their new friend on, without giving Peele a chance to speak to him. Tubby Muffin was on the landing; and Tubby was not to be eluded so easily.

"I say, Beresford, old chap—" he began.

"Scat!" growled Townsend.

"I'm speaking to Beresford!" said Tubby Muffin, with dignity. "I say, old scout—"

Topham and Topy hurried the new junior downstairs, and Tubby's remark was cut short. But the fat Classical followed on behind. He rolled out into the quadrangle with the trio.

The Fistical Four were there; Mornington and Erroll had joined them, and they were chatting near the School House. On the drive stood the big car from Rookham, with several admiring juniors round it.

"Ready, you fellows?" called out Arthur cheerily.

"Ready, old top!" answered Jimmy Silver.

Valentine Mornington raised his eyebrows.

"You goin' out with Baggs?" he asked.

"Yes."

Mornington's lip curled.

His look was distinctly exasperating to Jimmy Silver & Co., though they were, as a rule, friendly with Valentine Mornington. Erroll hastened to speak.

"I hope you'll have a jolly run," he said. "Come on, Morny; we're going down to Combe."

"You fellows come, too!" said Arthur hospitably. "Look at the car—plenty of room in it. Like to come?"

Erroll hesitated, and glanced at his chum.

There was no reason why the two juniors should not have accepted the invitation, cordially given.

But Mornington was not in a pleasant mood.

A good many times, since the arrival of the millionaire's son, Morny had gone out of his way to be disagreeable to him; but Arthur had, as a matter of fact, not observed it. He had made plenty of friends at Rookwood; and one ungracious face among so many cordial ones had not impressed itself on his attention. But the other fellows were well aware of Mornington's feelings, and there was an awkward pause.

They had little enough sympathy with Morny in the matter. The fact that he had once been wealthy, and was now poor, was no excuse for his bitterness towards the millionaire's son. It was quite unreasonable, though it was, perhaps, not unnatural.

"You're awfully good," said Mornington, in a sarcastic tone, of which the sarcasm was quite lost on Arthur Beresford-Baggs.

"Not a bit of it!" answered Arthur cheerily. "You're welcome to come if you'd like to!"

"Come along, Morny!" said Townsend.

"My dear man, I'm no end honoured!" said Mornington, with the same sarcastic infection in his voice. "It's a distinction to drive with a Baggs, I know! Your name is Baggs, I think," added Mornington, with a gracious smile to the new junior.

"Beresford-Baggs," answered Arthur, still unaware of the fact that Morny was attacking him. He was not accustomed to attacks camouflaged under a polite graciousity of manner.

"Ah, yes; my mistake!" drawled Mornington. "I forgot the Beresford! Somehow it always seems to me that it should be just Baggs!"

"Come along Morny," murmured Erroll.

"Wait a minute—I'm talkin' to Montgomery-Baggs!" answered Mornington, with a smile.

Some of the juniors grinned.

"Not Montgomery-Baggs—Beresford-Baggs!" said Arthur.

"There I go again!" smiled Mornington. "It's not an easy name to remember. I shall be callin' you Money-Baggs next!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur joined in the laugh heartily. He seemed quite tickled at the idea.

"I'll tell father that—I mean the pater!" he said. "Money-Baggs! Ha, ha, ha! It will make him laugh."

"Oh!" remarked Mornington, quick to catch poor Arthur's slip. "You call your father pater?"

"Yes."

"What for—if I may ask?"

"Oh, it's class!" said Arthur, taken off his guard. "I don't see any sense in it myself. Pater's a Latin word, and it means just the same. But it's class!"

"Oh, gad!" ejaculated Mornington, who had really not hoped to draw the "bouncer" to this extent. "I see! It's class!"

"Here, let's get into the car!" exclaimed Townsend hastily. "You can go and eat coke, Morny, if you don't want to come."

Topham and Topy were feeling extremely uncomfortable, and blushing for their new friend. Even the big car, and a pocketful of fivers, could hardly compensate for solecisms like this.

"Certainly I'm not comin'!" said Mornington deliberately. "Like the fellow's cheek to ask me, I think!"

Arthur started.

Goodnatured and unsuspecting as he was, he could not mistake that remark. His cheeks flushed.

Silver & Co. followed, with feelings of great discomfort. Mornington shrugged his shoulders again, and walked away with Erroll, who was very red. For once he was thoroughly ashamed of his chum.

There was already an occupant in the big car. Tubby Muffin was seated on the cushions, and he eyed the party rather uneasily as they came up.

"Out of that, Muffin!" snapped Townsend.

"I say, Beresford, can't I come?" piped Tubby Muffin.

"Let him come if he likes," said Arthur. "He ain't a cheeky rotter like that bloke Morny, anyhow."

Townsend gritted his teeth.

"Look here, we don't want that fat bouncer in the party," he exclaimed. "You've asked too many fellows already."

"Rot! Let him come!" said Arthur, whose temper had been ruffled by the unpleasant talk with Mornington. For once he was not disposed to accept dictation from his aristocratic chums.

"Look here, if he comes, we sha'n't come, then!" growled Townsend, quite "fed" at last with his peculiar friend.

"Suit yourself!" snapped Arthur.

"Oh, very well, then! Come away, Topy!"

Topham cast a rather regretful

The 4th Chapter.
Looking for Trouble!

"Morny, old chap—"

Kit Erroll spoke hesitatingly. He hardly knew what to make of his chum that afternoon.

Mornington and Erroll had been out of gates that afternoon; a rather silent ramble.

They were coming in, still silent, when a whirr and a cloud of dust along the road announced the arrival of a big car. Valentine Mornington stopped, and as he recognised the Rookwood car, he remained in the gateway, watching it advance, with a very moody expression on his face.

He did not seem to hear his chum's voice. He remained with his hands in his pockets, his eyes on the big car as it came swinging up the road. Erroll touched him on the arm, and then Morny glanced round.

"Well?" he said.

"Let's go in!"

"No, hurry! See, the conquering hero comes!" said Mornington sourly. "We're just in time to see young Money-bags arrive in state, with his merry friends. Fancy Jimmy Silver, the captain of our Fern, suckin' up to that rank outsider for his cash!"

Erroll frowned.

"You know you're unjust, Morny," he said tartly. "Jimmy Silver's doing nothing of the kind."

though, bother them. You're right, Erroll. I'm picking holes in the fellow about the way his money came, when it's really the fellow himself I dislike."

"I don't see why you should dislike him, Morny."

"You wouldn't," said Mornington moodily. "What do you think I feel like when I see that rank outsider rollin' in money—and I as hard up as Muffin?"

"Not quite so bad as that," said Erroll, with a smile.

"Very nearly! When I came to Rookwood, I was the richest fellow here. I could 'phone for a car in those days. I never looked at a fiver before I changed it. It was no fault of mine that made me poor. Now I have to look at a half-crown before I spend it. And to see that low rotter, who might be happy in a fried-fish shop, scatterin' tenners about—"

Mornington broke off with an angry grunt.

"Isn't that rather unreasonable, Morny?"

"Of course it is; I'm an unreasonable chap."

There was really nothing to be said in reply to that. Nobody's eyes were wider open to his faults than Morny's; but clearly as he saw them, he did not seem to feel called upon to cure them. The big car was close at hand now, and Erroll slipped his arm through Morny's and drew him away from the gates. He was anxious to avoid another unpleasant encounter.

Erroll was a little angry with his chum's wrong-headedness, but he could feel for him, all the same. Like Lucifer, Son of the Morning, the dandy of the Fourth had fallen from a high estate, and great was the fall thereof. And though outwardly Morny gave no sign, there was little doubt that inwardly he felt the change keenly enough.

Morny's face was dark as they crossed the quadrangle. In the doorway of the School House he stopped to exchange a remark of two with Smythe of the Shell, who was lounging there. Smythe's drawing conversation was not specially entertaining, and Erroll could not help suspecting that his chum was purposely lingering to encounter the motor-party as they came in.

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Fortunately, he was got to the end study without trouble. Mornington went to his own quarters with Erroll, a discontented frown on his face. Tubby Muffin looked in on them there. The fat Classical bestowed a patronising nod on Mornington.

"Had a jolly time?" asked Morny sardonically.

"Tip-top!" said Tubby, with great satisfaction. "Sorry you didn't come! He, he, he! I say, we've been a hundred miles at least. My pal doesn't care how he spends money. We stopped for tea—early tea, you know—at a swagger hotel at the seaside. It was gorgeous—simply gorgeous!"

And Tubby Muffin chuckled over the happy recollection.

"I'm ready for tea now, though," he added. "That beast Lovell shut me out of the end study! I'll have tea with you fellows, if you like, and



TACKLING THE NEW BOY! Mornington, good fighting man as he was, was driven back under a shower of blows. In earlier, less moneyed days, Arthur Baggs had had his full share of scrapping among a rough set, whose fighting was, perhaps, a little more vigorous than that the schoolboys were accustomed to. "My only hat!" murmured Jimmy Silver. "And that's the chap I was going to protect!"

"Look here—" he began hotly.

"Shut up, Morny, there's a good chap!" murmured Erroll.

Mornington shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't see any cheek in asking you, Mister Mornington!" exclaimed Arthur. "I've asked these blokes—I mean chaps, and they've said they'll come. They're as good as you, I s'pose?"

Jimmy Silver's eyes were glinting. Morny's remark was as disparaging to Arthur's companions, as to Arthur himself.

"You'd better hold your tongue, Morny," said Jimmy Silver. "If you can't be civil, you can shut up!"

"I'll please myself about that!" yawned Mornington. "You know my opinion of that outsider, and of the fellows who suck up to him for his money, too."

"You cheeky cad—" roared Lovell.

"If that means us—" began Baby hotly.

"Who are you calling an outsider, Mornington?" inquired Arthur Beresford-Baggs.

"If you mean whom, I am callin' you an outsider!" answered Mornington, calmly.

"What are you calling me names for, I'd like to know?" said Arthur.

"I ain't done nothing to you, 'ave I?" In his excitement and resentment, poor Arthur's grammar was betraying him. Mornington's lip curled mockingly.

"Here, come along!" said Townsend, catching Arthur by the arm.

"But that cheeky bloke—"

"Come along, I tell you!"

Cecil Townsend fairly dragged Arthur away to the car. Jimmy

glance at the big car; but he followed his friend. The two nuts felt that the only tolerable way of getting on with Beresford-Baggs was to keep the upper hand of him, and the upper hand was now evidently in danger. They turned their backs and walked off.

"Oh, my eye!" murmured Arthur.

Jimmy Silver & Co. exchanged a glance. They would have given a good deal to get out of that excursion, if it could have been done civilly. But they could not appear to share the snobbishness of Morny, or the uppishness of Townsend and Topham. Jimmy set the example of getting into the car.

Arthur followed the Fistical Four in. There were six fellows in the car, but there was room for more.

"Any other fellows you know who'd like to come, Silver?" asked Arthur.

"Shall I ask somebody?"

"Yes, do!"

"Conroy, old top, looking for a car?" called out Jimmy Silver, catching sight of the Colonial Co. in the quad. "Room for three!"

Conroy and Pons and Van Ryn looked round.

"Come on, you fellers!" called out Arthur.

Conroy & Co. laughed, and came on; so the big car was full as it rolled out of the gates of Rookwood. And it was a merry enough excursion after all; and Topham and Topy, nursing their sulky dignity at Rookwood, were certainly not missed. Indeed, as Lovell humorously remarked, Topham and Topy had made the excursion a success by staying out of it.

"Even Topham and Topy drew the line, after the exhibition he made of himself in the quad this afternoon," pursued Mornington, unheeding.

"But our dear Uncle James doesn't mind!"

"You ought not to have drawn him as you did."

"Why not?" sneered Mornington. "A low cad ought to be shown up when he wedges in among his betters."

"I don't see that he's specially low; and as for being a cad, he's not so casual as fellows who are flattering him for his money."

"Meanin' Jimmy Silver?"

"Certainly not; you know that!" said Erroll, speaking more sharply than he was wont with Morny.

"You know the fellows I'm referring to. Baggs seems harmless enough."

"Is it harmless to make a tremendous fortune out of munitions?"

"Baggs didn't do that; he's not responsible for his father."

"He spreads the money around. Money made like that isn't nice," said Mornington. "The fellow ought not to come here. The Head ought to be a bit more careful about a fellow's antecedents."

Erroll smiled slightly.

"My dear chap, lots of great fortunes were made in ways that wouldn't bear the light of day," he said. "Dash it all, Baggs might ask you how your ancestors came by their estates."

"Quite so! My ancestors got their land by stealin' it!" said Morny cheerfully. "They came over with William the Norman, an' bagged all they could lay their hands on. They haven't left much of it to me,

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MORNINGTON'S ENEMY!

(Continued from previous page.)

tell you all about where we've been and what we've—

"Get out!" snapped Mornington.

Tubby blinked at him.

"Did you tell me to get out, Morny?" he asked.

"Yes, I did, and I mean it!"

Tubby's fat lip curled in a portentous sneer.

"Jealous, what?" he asked.

"What, you fat rascal?" shouted Mornington.

"He, he! You needn't think I want to stay in this study," said Muffin scornfully.

"Not at all, I assure you. I've got wealthy friends, Morny, and I can tell you I don't mean to waste my time on a fellow like you. Who are you, anyway? Poor and stuck-up! Yah!"

With that Tubby Muffin turned on his heel haughtily to walk out of the study in lofty scorn.

His crushing departure, however, lost a little of its effect, as the enraged Mornington rushed after him and planted his boot on Muffin's fat person.

"Yaroooh!"

Tubby went sprawling into the passage with a fiendish yell. The door slammed after him.

Mornington returned to his chair with a sullen brow. There was a howl through the keyhole.

"Yah! Cad! Come out here, and I'll dust the passage with you! Yah! Funk!"

Morny made a savage rush to the door and threw it open. There was a rapid patter of feet in the passage.

As Morny reached the passage, Tubby Muffin reached the stairs, and he went down them two at a time.

Apparently he had changed his mind about dusting the passage with Morny.

The 5th Chapter.

Face to Face.

Jimmy Silver frowned.

Jimmy was coming along the passage after prep, and he came on Mornington and Erroll near their study.

Erroll was speaking to his chum very earnestly, and Jimmy could not help hearing his words as he came up.

"For goodness' sake, Morny, let the chap alone! It's simply rotten to pick a quarrel with him for nothing."

"It's not for nothin'."

"What is there, then—"

"I don't like the fellow. He annoys me," answered Mornington coolly.

"I dare say it will do him good to give him a hidin'." It will do me good, anyhow. It will be a satisfaction."

That was why Jimmy Silver frowned. He did not need telling whom the two juniors were discussing, and Jimmy paused.

"Excuse my barging in," he said.

"It seems that you're looking for trouble with young Baggs, Morny."

Mornington nodded coolly.

"You've got it," he answered.

"Do you mean to say that you're going to pick a quarrel with a fellow who's done you no harm, and pitch into him?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver angrily and scornfully.

"He's done me harm."

"How, then?"

"He offends my fastidious nerves," explained Mornington calmly.

"His mere existence is an offence to me. I shall get a lot of satisfaction out of giving him a lickin'."

"And you think that's reason enough for picking a row with him?" asked Jimmy, breathing hard.

"Quite."

"Well, I don't."

"Sorry you disagree with me, old top!" said Mornington politely.

"It won't make any difference."

"It will make a difference," answered Jimmy Silver grimly.

"That kid is new here, and he's not going to be bullied. I don't suppose for a moment that he can stand up to you; he doesn't look it. You're not going to have the satisfaction, as you call it, of thrashing a chap who's done you no harm. If you meddle with Baggs,

I shall meddle with you, quick enough, as captain of the Form."

And without waiting for a reply, Jimmy Silver went downstairs and joined his chums in the Common-room.

Mornington laughed lightly.

"I suppose you don't want a row with Jimmy Silver, old chap?" said Erroll.

"For goodness' sake give up the idea!"

"I don't mind," answered Mornington.

"If Jimmy Silver rows with me, he'll get as good as he gives. I'm all the keener on it now, to show Silver that I mean to have my own way."

"That's utter rot!"

"Thanks!" said Mornington, unmoved.

"Look here, Morny—"

"You needn't back me up," yawned Mornington.

"Keep in the study and dig at Greek, if you like! I'm goin' down."

Erroll remained undecided for a few moments after his chum left him. But he finally followed Mornington.

Perhaps he still hoped to restrain that wilful youth, though the hope was a faint one.

Most of the Fourth had gathered in the junior Common-room after prep, and Mornington found the room pretty crowded when he entered.

The Fistical Four were there—Jimmy Silver with rather a clouded brow, which did not clear as Mornington came in. Arthur Beresford-Baggs was also there, and he was talking with Rawson, Townsend and Topham hovered at hand, but they had not quite got over their sulks, and had not, so far, made any advances towards their estranged friend.

Tubby Muffin was listening to Arthur's observations to Rawson with an expression of great admiration on his fat face.

Evidently Tubby was prepared to regard as a pearl of wisdom any word that fell from such gilt-edged lips.

Valentine Mornington came towards them, and the expression on his handsome face drew a good many glances upon him.

Morny's temper was always uncertain, and his look was well-known when he was "looking for trouble."

Jimmy Silver made an impatient movement.

"What's the row, Jimmy?" asked Lovell.

"Look at Morny!"

Lovell glanced round, and grinned.

"Dear old Morny's on the war-path," he remarked. "Is it the new fellow?"

"Yes; and if he rows with him—"

Jimmy set his lips.

"Better let them alone, Jimmy."

Jimmy Silver shook his head. Letting Mornington have his wilful way did not consort with Uncle James' stern idea of his duties as captain of the Fourth.

Arthur noted Mornington's approach, and he met him with an aggressive look.

Poor Arthur's manners certainly were not quite so polished as Morny's. He proceeded, involuntarily, to play into his enemy's hands.

"Looking for me, p'raps!" he blurted out.

Mornington eyed him.

"You let my pal Beresford alone!" blustered Tubby Muffin.

"You needn't show off your jealousy of my pal Beresford. Oh!"

Mornington reached out, and Tubby Muffin dodged behind Arthur.

Under that protection he emitted a defiant "Yah!"

Morny brushed past the new junior, intent upon Tubby's fat ear, or, perhaps, regarding him as a good opening for a "row." He brushed past roughly, and Arthur staggered a pace.

The next moment he shot forward, and thrust himself between Mornington and Tubby.

"You let 'im alone!" he gasped.

"Don't touch me, you unspeakable cad!" shouted Mornington, as Arthur, in his excitement, caught his shoulder.

"Who are you, that you mustn't be touched?" jeered Arthur, and, instead of letting Morny's shoulder go, he tightened his grasp, and swung him away from Tubby Muffin, much to the latter's relief.

"Oh, ye gods!" murmured Townsend.

"What manners! What an accent! What a flow of language! Oh, ye gods!"

"Couldn't possibly stand him!" murmured Topham.

"Oh, never!"

Mornington recovered himself, and turned upon the new junior, his eyes blazing, and his fists clenched.

"You—you horrid cad! You—you—"

Morny was stuttering in his wrath. "Put up your hands, you rotter!"

He advanced upon Arthur with his hands up.

"Shut the door!" murmured Smythe of the Shell.

"There's goin' to be a circus! No prefects wanted."

Tracy shut the door, and put his back to it. There was a buzz of excitement in the Common-room.

Jimmy Silver strode forward, and interposed between the two adversaries.

"Stop it, Morny!" he said curtly.

"Mind your own business!"

"This is my business! If you touch the new kid you've got to deal with me!"

"How much money has he lent you?" sneered Mornington.

"Why, you—you—I—"

stuttered Jimmy Silver, greatly enraged by the insinuation. "I—I—"

He was interrupted by Arthur. The new junior pushed him gently aside.

"Let 'im come on!" said Arthur.

"It's very kind of you, but I can look arter myself!"

"Arter!" murmured the horrified Townsend.

"Did you hear that, Topy?"

Topy shuddered.

Under the stress of excitement, the hapless Beresford-Baggs was undoubtedly giving himself hopelessly away. Three years of an expensive tutor rolled off him like water from a duck's back.

There was a chuckle from the crowd of Rookwood juniors.

"My dear man," said Jimmy Silver, "you stand off! You can't tackle Morny. Morny's a big fighting man here."

Arthur grinned.

"I've scrapped since I was a nipper of seven," he said.

"Let 'im come on, and you'll see!"

Jimmy Silver looked very doubtful, but he stepped aside. There was no gainsaying a youth who seemed determined to rush on his fate in this way.

"Oh, all right!" he said.

"Stop when you get fed!"

"He won't stop till I've thrashed him!" said Valentine Mornington, through his set teeth.

"That's not for you to settle," said Jimmy coldly.

"Go it, Baggy, if you're determined on it!"

Jimmy backed into the ring that was forming round the two adversaries. He wondered a little whether there was more in the chubby Beresford-Baggs than met the eye. He was soon to learn.

Kit Erroll came quietly into the Common-room, and Tracy closed the door again carefully.

When a fight happened in the room, as it sometimes did, prefects and masters were not wanted on the scene.

Distressed as he was by his chum's wrong-headed obstinacy, Erroll was there to back him up, so much as he could.

But there was little formality about the "scrap." The juniors did not remove their jackets, and gloves were not forthcoming.

There was no time to be lost if the fight was to take place uninterrupted.

Mornington's angry fury would not admit of delay, either. He pushed his cuffs back hurriedly, and rushed at the "boulder."

His fierce attack drove Arthur back a few paces, and Morny's fists came home on the chubby face.

But it was only for a moment or two that he had the advantage.

Arthur recovered himself quickly, and attacked in his turn, with an energy that made the Rookwooders open their eyes.

It was only too clear to Morny, as well as the rest, that there was more in the millionaire's son than met the eye.

Mornington, good fighting-man as he was, was driven back under a shower of blows.

"My only hat!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

"My only merry Aunt Jane! That's the chap I was going to protect!"

"He don't seem to want much protecting!" grinned Lovell.

"Ha, ha! No."

Mornington was driven right round the ring, panting and furious.

In earlier, less-moneyed days, Arthur Baggs had had his full share of "scrapping" among a rough set, whose fighting was perhaps a little more vigorous than that the school-boys were accustomed to.

He piled into the combat with terrific vim.

But Morny was game. Whatever his faults, he had never been accused of want of pluck. He needed all his pluck now.

Hammer and tongs the fight went on for a good five minutes, and then Mornington went down, with a heavy fall.

Arthur stepped back, and Erroll helped his chum to rise. To his surprise, Morny gave him a rather wry smile.

"There's some beef in the cad!" Morny murmured.

"There is, and no mistake," said Erroll.

"But I'm goin' to lick him!"

"H'm!"

Morny came on again, and the fight recommenced.

Arthur received a good deal of punishment now, but he returned it with interest. It was, in fact, growing clearer that good fighting-man that Morny was, he had met more than his match in the heir of the Beresford-Baggs millions.

But he would not give in.

Arthur went down with a crash; but he was up again as actively as a cat.

And when Morny went to the floor again he stayed there. The fight had lasted ten minutes, and those ten minutes had been exciting.

Arthur stood gasping as Morny, in vain, attempted to rise. Erroll ran forward to help him to his feet.

"Any more?" gasped Arthur.

Mornington made an effort to toe the line again, but he reeled, and would have fallen had not Erroll caught him in time.

Erroll made a knee for him, and the dandy of the Fourth sank upon it, gasping. There was a loud cachinnation from Reginald Muffin.

"He, he! Morny's licked! He, he, he!"

"You shut up!" growled Arthur unexpectedly.

"Whatcher want to crow at a bloke for when he's down?"

"Oh!" gasped Tubby.

Mornington gasped for breath.

"I'm done!" he said.

"I came here to lick you, but, by gad! life is full of surprises. Give us your fist, kid! I'm sorry I ragged you!"

And Mornington held out his hand frankly enough. Arthur grinned as he took it. Then he rubbed a darkening eye.

"All serene!" he said.

"I don't bear malice. I don't see what you wanted to row with me for."

"My dear man, I was lookin' for trouble, and I've found it! I'm sorry, not because you've licked me, but because I really think you're a good sort, in your own way. Erroll, old scout, come and help me bathe my eye!"

Erroll led his chum from the room. And Jimmy Silver & Co., grinning, marched Arthur away to repair damages. Both parties, however, had received damages that were not easily repaired, and that attracted Mr. Bootles' eye in the Form-room the next morning, leading to severe impositions for the two heroes.

But Arthur, much to his astonishment, found that he had made a new friend as the unexpected result of that tough encounter in the Common-room, and he was no longer Mornington's enemy.

THE END

(Another long complete story of Jimmy Silver & Co. next Monday, entitled "Arthur's Uncle." By Owen Conquest.)

-AN-

EASTER ARGUMENT.

By CLIVE FENN.

Old Bangs, the glossy-coated beetle, said that it was all perfect nonsense, and that there wasn't going to be no Easter, much less a spring.

"At my time of life I know better," he said.

"I have seen the world. I am not a chap at all likely to be deceived. If you care to be conceited enough to doubt me, ask the gardener. I have had quite enough of all this shallow talk about the glad spring-time, and the sunshine. Ta-ta! I'm off back home to spend the next few months."

Bangs had emerged from a very snug retreat amidst some straw and lumber in the corner where Grubb, the gardener, placed his barrow-loads of unwanted stuff—cut grass and what not, useful material for later on, when beds had to be made up, and top-dressing was wanted.

Bangs was very comfortable, but he lived alone, and, as happens in such cases, had grown a bit selfish and egotistical. He liked to have things just so, which means exactly as it suited him, and he was inclined to be angry with the hibernated Red Admiral, a Vanessa Atalanta, who had fitted out of a cranny in the buttress of the red brick wall—the south wall, which got all the warmth that was going, and where Grubb

trained his peaches—because the sun had peeped out from behind a big, woolly mass of clouds.

The butterfly thought it was summer-time, and hoped to have some of those joyous times it had enjoyed in the late season of the year before—it seemed hundreds of years back—when it had skimmed as lightly over the garden as its namesake, Miss Atalanta of the classics, used to dart across the waves, and she never even splashed her ankles, or bent the ears of golden corn when she tripped it over the nodding wheat, ripe for the granary.

But the butterfly was disposed to think the surly and opinionated beetle was in the right of it. There was really nothing doing. True, the gay and happy-hearted wallflowers were laughing among themselves, and sending forth a delicious scent which floated through the misty garden, but they were hardy folks, who could stand the nip of the frost when not too keen.

"The old beetle knew what he was talking about," shivered the Red Admiral, as it crept down into the sheltered warmth of its sanctuary. "I doubt if there will be any Easter, and I shall never see the summer, while, if I do, I shall be laughed at for my shabby coat, and I haven't got a new one, worse luck!"

And yet there were signs of spring. Grubb, the gardener, was a heavy, brown, silent man, and when he did say anything, it was usually to grumble because this crop, or the other, did not come up to his expectations.

Perhaps you have noticed that this is always the way with gardeners. They invariably hope for something better. But that is getting away from the point. The point here was that the season was coming on, and that Grubb was busy. Oh, he did not miss much!

But the beetle was not seen any more. He had felt the cold. When friends phoned him up, he merely chuckled.

"I am too old for such stuff," he said.

"There won't be anything worth dropping in for until July, and most likely it will be cold. I am better where I am!"

Well, what can be done with such a fellow? Others knew the spring was coming along. Even old Grubb smiled at the pigeons flying round the cotes in the sunshine which came with the last days of March. Folks say a lot of miserable, uncomfortable things about March, but the fact is the month which saw the tragic exit of Julius Caesar, is not so bad. Sometimes it may roar like a lion, and whistle with its special brand of western storm in the eaves and the chimneys, but now and again it is as mild as the sunniest times of blazing June.

So it was now. Early on, the month had brought tear-dimmed zephyrs from the south sighing with strange and wonderful music, messages across the salt marshes and the sea. Now March had turned festive, and the air was warm, as in the land where the cuckoo likes to spend our fall and winter-time, also the swallows which wing it so soon.

The Red Admiral came out again and sunned himself on a tuft of star-moss which was dry, for a wonder. It had been saturated since the end of September. The silvery lake at the end of the garden rippled and glistened in the sun. From the glebe farm came the quacking of ducks, and then such a commotion, for Mrs. Partlett, the big Brahma, had laid an egg. Mr. Greensmith, who owned the garden, came out with the morning paper behind his back, and walked through to the kitchen garden and chatted with Grubb. They were both far more interested in what was doing that morning than in anything the paper contained.

It was real hot sunshine at last. The southernwood was perking up. A smart little Tom Thumb nasturtium popped its head out of the herbaceous border just to see what was happening.

"Thank goodness, Easter at last!" he cried.

But it was only Easter Eve. A special messenger was sent to tell the beetle that it was Easter Eve, and that he must come out of his retirement, for everybody's sake; but old Bangs merely chuckled and said he was not taking any.

"I have been had before," he said gruffly, as the messenger insisted. "I shall wait and see."

But just then, even the beetle's doubts were dismissed, for the bells from the old church rang out their Easter message, and the sun rose higher in the blue sky, while the garden laughed and looked more lovely than ever it had done.

It was really true—Easter had come.

A COMPLETE STORY of the CHUMS OF THE SCHOOL in the BACKWOODS.



THE RIVAL GOLD-SEEKERS!

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Frank Richards & Co., of Cedar Creek School.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The 1st Chapter.

The Camp in the Sierra.

"Let's look at the map, Franky!" The sun had set on the sierras of Northern California. In a wide, deep canyon, by the side of a shallow, rippling stream, a camp-fire blazed, casting ruddy light upon the rocks and the pine-trees. Far in the distance great Mount Shasta towered aloft, with the gleam of starlight upon its mantle of eternal snow.

Frank Richards & Co. were gathered round the camp-fire. The three chums of Cedar Creek School were on their way to Cinnamon Bar, where their quest of Bronze Bill's bonanza was to commence. The party had halted for the night in the shadowy canyon, and Billy Cook, the ranchman, who was in charge of the party, had gone into the chapparal looking for game. Frank and Bob Lawless and Beauclerc had built up a fire, and were resting round it while they waited for the ranchman's return for supper. Four horses, staked out with trail-ropes, were cropping the scanty herbage by the stream.

"Yes, let's look at the map again," said Vere Beauclerc. "We begin looking for the bonanza to-morrow, Frank. We shall get to Cinnamon Bar about midday."

"Right-ho!" said Frank. He drew out the buckskin map, which he had received from the hands of the dying "rustler" in the far-off Thompson Valley in Canada.

The three chums gathered round to look at it, and Frank cast a glance over his shoulder into the shadows of the canyon. Bob Lawless grinned as he noted it.

"Thinking of the greasers, Franky?" he asked.

"Carlos Cabrera would give a good deal to see that map," answered Frank. "But I suppose we have done with that rascal."

"I guess so. He had to light out of Canada, and I guess he wouldn't dare to show up here in Shasta County, California," said Bob. "There is a rope waiting for him if he does."

Frank Richards nodded. The thought of the scarred Californian had haunted his mind ever since the party had crossed the United States border; but nothing had been seen of the swarthy ruffian. Carlos Cabrera was a fugitive from justice, and it did not seem likely that the chums of Cedar Creek would fall in with him again. The scarred Californian had stained his hands with crime for the possession of the buckskin map; but it had escaped him. In a few days now, as Frank hoped, the map would have guided the schoolboy adventurers to the Golden Arroyo, in the shadow of Mount Shasta, and the golden nuggets would be "lifted."

"I guess it's plain enough," said Bob, with his eyes on the map. "Here's Cinnamon Bar—here's the Cinnamon River. Up the river to Coffin Canyon—that's a cheerful name!—and then the Golden Arroyo lies ahead. I guess we sha'n't be long in trailing it down, once we get to work. Hallo, is that you, Billy?"

There was a footstep on the rocks. The three schoolboys glanced round, in anticipation of seeing the ranch foreman returning to camp.

But it was not Billy Cook who appeared in the radius of light cast by the blaze of the camp-fire.

The light gleamed upon three swarthy faces, one of them strangely scared, and upon three rifles that were levelled at the campers. Frank Richards & Co. sprang to their feet. "Hands up!"

The scarred Californian rapped out the order. "Oh, my hat!" muttered Frank Richards, in dismay.

Bob Lawless gritted his teeth. He made a movement towards his rifle, which was leaning against a rock close at hand; but Vere Beauclerc caught his arm.

"Hold on, Bob!" he muttered.

"Hands up, you young fool!" snarled Carlos Cabrera. "A step, and—"

Bob Lawless stopped, and put up his hands. There was no arguing with levelled rifles.

"I guess it's your game, you pesky polecat!" he said coolly. "Up they go!"

The three schoolboys stood in a row with their hands up. Carlos Cabrera dropped his rifle into the hollow of his arm and came nearer. His two grinning companions kept the schoolboys covered.

"I guess it is my game, senioritos!" grinned Cabrera. "That is Bronze Bill's map in your hand, Richards?"

"Yes," muttered Frank.

His grasp tightened on the buckskin map over his head. The scarred Californian laughed.

"You did not expect to see me here?" he said.

"I hoped that you were in prison by this time," answered Frank.

Cabrera laughed again.

"You have been watched ever since you crossed the border," he said. "I knew that sooner or later you would come—you would not leave Bronze Bill's bonanza unsought. You have been watched. Where is your comrade? There were four in the party."

The chums of Cedar Creek, exchanged dismayed glances.

Their quest of the bonanza, for which two lives had already been spent, had ended as soon as it had begun.

Frank looked round into the shadows surrounding the camp, hoping for a sign of Billy Cook's return. The three greasers, standing in the light of the camp-fire, were visible at a distance, and if the ranchman should return—

But there was no sound in the great canyon save the sigh of the night wind in the pines.

"Muy bien!" muttered Cabrera. "It is the map—Bronze Bill's map. Here it is marked where Juarez died. The gold is there! Gracias, seniorito!"

The three greasers drew together, looking at the map, and for the moment the schoolboys were forgotten. There was eager greed in each of the three swarthy faces.

Frank Richards & Co. stood motionless. The rifles were ready to turn upon them at a movement.

"Oh," muttered Frank, "if Billy knew—if—"

From the darkness of the rocks there came the sudden report of a rifle, and Carlos Cabrera, still with the buckskin map in his hand, pitched heavily forward and fell.

rocks as they fled for the nearest clump of pines.

Bob Lawless leaped for his rifle and threw it to his shoulder.

Crack! "Buck up, you fellows!" shouted Bob.

Frank Richards and Beauclerc were quick to follow his example.

Bullets whizzed after the two greasers as they fled—over their heads. The schoolboys were only too glad to see them go.

In a few seconds the two ruffians had vanished from sight, but in the distance could still be heard the clatter of falling stones, as they fled frantically down the canyon.

A minute later a burly form loomed up into view—Billy Cook, the foreman of the Lawless Ranch, with a smoking rifle in his hand.

He came up to the campfire with a run.

"Douse that glim!" he called out. Frank Richards threw an armful of brushwood on the fire, and the blaze died down.

Deep shadows fell upon the camp, securing them from the rifles of the Californians in the distance, if they should turn to shoot.

Billy Cook panted breathlessly up. "I guess I was wanted hyer," he remarked coolly. "You young jays reckoned you could work the rifle without me to look arter you, hay? Where would you be now?"

"Good old Billy!" said Bob Lawless.

Frank Richards was looking down at Cabrera.

Villain as the man was, it made Frank shiver to think that it was a dead man that lay at his feet.

But the next minute the scarred Californian groaned and stirred.

"He is not dead!" exclaimed Frank in great relief.

Billy Cook grinned.

"I guess not," he answered. "I reckon he's creased, sonny, and he won't be much the worse for it arter."

Frank understood then.

The Californian had been stunned by a ball that grazed his skull; a

head. His fingers came away died crimson. Blood was oozing through his thick, black hair.

His glittering eyes wandered over the group surrounding him, wildly. "Carambo!" he muttered. "Madre de Dios!"

"I guess you're let off easy, you pesky Dago!" said Billy Cook. "I could have put the ball through your rascal skull as easy!"

Cabrera gave him a bitter look. He staggered up, but fell again, and Frank Richards gave him a helping hand. The scarred Californian leaned heavily against a pine.

His black eyes scintillated as they fell on the buckskin map in Frank Richards' hand. Frank thrust it into his pocket.

Crack!

It was a rifle-shot in the distance; Cabrera's comrades had turned. But the fire was darkened, and the shot was at random. It flew a dozen yards from the Cedar Creek party.

Billy Cook shrugged his broad shoulders.

"I guess it's time we lit out, with them two scallywags lurking in the timber," he remarked. "Loose the horses, Bob. We're getting on to the bar, and there won't be any supper here, I calculate."

"Right-ho!" said Bob.

"And I guess this pesky greaser is coming with us!" said Billy Cook. "He is wanted by the sheriff of Shasta County, and I reckon we're going to hand him over, and keep him out of mischief. He's got the death of Bronze Bill, up in the Thompson Valley, to answer for."

Bob Lawless loosed the horses from the trail-ropes. It was evidently prudent to push on and escape from the dangerous locality.

"Bind his hands, Franky, while I keep an eye on him," added the ranch-foreman.

The Californian made no resistance.

His weapons were taken and flung into the stream, and Frank Richards bound his hands together with a length of rope. Compassion moved him to bandage the ruffian's head; a service for which Cabrera rewarded him with a black look of hatred.

"No hitch the trail-rope to him," said Billy Cook.

The adventurers mounted their horses, and Carlos Cabrera followed Billy Cook's horse, at the end of a rope, led like a captured steer. With a ring of hoofs on the hard rocks, the party started.

They looked back from a distance as a sudden flash of ruddy light danced on the darkness. The campfire had blazed up again, and was glowing behind them. In the circle of light two moving figures could be seen. Billy Cook chuckled.

"The greasers!" he said. "Too late for us! Kim on!"

And the horsemen rode on through the shadowy canyon, and the blaze of the campfire died into darkness behind.

The 3rd Chapter. At Cinnamon Bar I

"Cinnamon Bar!" said Bob. Lights gleamed ahead of the riders at last.

The hour was late. In the darkness of the rocky trail, Frank Richards & Co had not ventured to ride faster than a trot. But the lights of Cinnamon Bar gleamed ahead at last.

"I guess I shall be glad to be abed," yawned Bob. "I'm sleepy! How do you feel, Franky?"

"Nearly nodding off," said Frank Richards, with a smile. "I suppose there's some show in the place where we can put up, Billy?"

"Yep!" answered Billy Cook. "There's the Cinnamon Hotel. I guess I was hyer before, and I remember. You'll have to rough it. It's only a timber shanty with plank beds. I reckon!"

"Oh, we can rough it!" said Beauclerc, with a smile.

"I guess we've got to hand the greaser over before we turn in, too," said Billy Cook. "There's a calaboose in the camp for him, and I guess he will be safe there."

The horsemen pushed on. Cinnamon Bar was a collection of a couple of dozen huts and cabins, scattered along the canyon, some of them gathered round a larger wooden building, which was evidently the hotel.

The lights gleamed from the hotel. The other buildings were in darkness save for a twinkling candle here and there.

From the lighted shanty hotel came a buzz of voices and a clinking of glasses, as the travellers stopped outside.



A FIGHT FOR LIFE! Frank Richards struggled fiercely in the grasp of the scarred ruffian. Cabrera's followers were springing to the aid of their leader when the struggling foes rolled from the slippery rock. Splash! There was a choking cry from Cabrera as the waters dashed over him.

The 2nd Chapter.

Turning the Tables.

Crack!

The rifle-shot rang and echoed among the rocks and the pines, thudding into silence.

Cabrera lay motionless where he had fallen, the buckskin map clutched in his hand. His two companions started and sprang round, gripping their weapons.

Their dusky faces were wild with alarm.

Crack!

Another shot rang out from the darkness, and one of the swarthy ruffians uttered a cry as a lock of greasy black hair was cut from his head by the whizzing bullet.

With one accord the two Californians rushed for cover.

Their trampling feet rang on the

He cast a suspicious glance round into the shadows.

"Looking for game up the canyon," answered Frank.

"He will meet with a surprise when he returns!" grinned the Californian.

"Hand me the map, seniorito!" Frank hesitated.

"Diaz!" rapped out Cabrera. "Si, amigo."

"If he does not hand me the map, shoot him dead in his tracks!"

"Si!"

"Hand it over, Franky," muttered Bob. "It's a cinch. They've got us by the short hairs this time."

Frank Richards nodded.

It was a bitter pill to swallow; but there was no help for it.

He handed the map to the scarred Californian. Cabrera clutched it eagerly, and his black eyes scintillated as he stared at the scratches on the buckskin.

feat requiring great skill in marksmanship, often performed by cowboys in dealing with a refractory steer that eludes the lasso.

Frank stooped and caught the buckskin map from the dusky fingers of the Californian.

"I guess it was a near thing!" remarked Billy Cook. "He has seen the map, though!"

"Yes, he's seen it."

"I reckon it would be safer to knock the cuss on the head," remarked the ranchman.

"Billy!"

"Oh, I ain't going to do it!" grinned the ranchman. "I said it would be safer, and so it would. Mr. Lawless wouldn't be pleased to know you was here, if he knowed that this greaser was cavortin' around. Hallo, he's coming to!"

Cabrera sat up on the rocky ground, and his hand went to his



THE RIVAL GOLD-SEEKERS!

(Continued from the previous page.)

Shasta towered aloft in the sunlight. Its snowy summit in the clouds and the belt of "red snow" for which the mountain is famous, shining as the sun glanced upon it. Frank Richards & Co. gazed with great interest at the famous mountain, which towers fourteen thousand feet above sea-level, like a giant sentinel keeping watch and ward over the Californian sierra.

Billy Cook rejoined the schoolboys after a time, and his brow was wrinkled in a frown. "I guess that bird has flown!" was his first remark.

"Cabrera?" exclaimed Frank. The ranchman nodded. "The calabooze was busted in the night," he said. "Come along and see! I've just heard it from Jake."

Frank Richards & Co. followed him down the rugged, rocky street, and they stopped at a deserted log-cabin. The door had been forced open, and hung loose on its hide hinges. On the earthen floor inside lay the fragments of a severed rope. The Californian was gone!

"I guess his birds nosed him out, and helped him away!" said Billy Cook ruefully. "Jake's man found him gone at dawn. I calculate it can't be helped now. We shall have to keep our eyes peeled on the trail, and the sooner we start the better."

"Cabrera has seen the map," said Frank, with a troubled look. "He can't remember it all, I suppose, but will know in which direction we're going."

"I guess so," Billy Cook paused. "If Mr. Lawless knew all this, I guess he wouldn't want you youngsters to keep on the trail. I guess it's my duty to tote you home."

Frank Richards & Co. exchanged a smile. They were not likely to give up the quest of the bonanza at that stage, for fear of the scarred Californian and his confederates.

"I guess not, Billy!" said Bob Lawless emphatically. "You can ride home to Canada if you like, and leave us here. I guess we're keeping on the trail till we've found the bonanza."

"Yes, rather!" said Frank Richards. "Then get on your horses, and let's lose no time," said Billy Cook, apparently realising the uselessness of argument.

And ten minutes later the adventurers rode out of Cinnamon Bar, Frank Richards with the buckskin map in his hand.

The 4th Chapter. Coffin Canyon!

Frank Richards & Co. were very much on the alert when the scattered buildings of Cinnamon Bar were left behind, and they rode into the rocky wilderness that stretched northward from Mount Shasta.

That Cabrera would not yet give up his hope of seizing the bonanza they were pretty well assured. So far, the scarred Californian had been defeated, and his last escape had been a narrow one; but it was not likely he would give up the quest while a hope remained. And little time as he had had to study the buckskin map, there was no doubt that he had gathered some information from it, sufficient to give him a clue to the direction to be taken by the gold-seekers.

But no sign of an enemy was to be seen as they rode away on the rocky trail, the horses' hoofs clinking on the stones.

Two or three lone prospectors were seen in the distance; but the last of these was left behind as the noonday sun shone down upon the sierra.

Their guide, so far, was a leaping mountain stream, which was called the Cinnamon River on the map, but which was rather a mountain torrent, fed by the melting snows on the summit of Shasta. With many a cascade, the stream murmured and tumbled on its way, gleaming in the sun, in places only a foot deep, in other places gathering in deep pools under the shadow of towering rocks.

Five miles from the mining-camp the stream flowed into a narrow, dark canyon, shadowed by pines. Billy Cook halted his horse there, and stared into the canyon ahead grimly.

"I guess that's Coffin Canyon," he said. "You'll have to dismount hyer, I reckon."

The schoolboys dismounted, and the horses were led on into the canyon, by a steep slope over rocky soil.

Even at midday the canyon was gloomy with shadows from the high cliffs that rose to the sky on either side.

The explorers camped at last, for a rest, by the stream, and they were very careful to keep watch while they rested and ate their midday meal.

In this rocky wilderness they were far from all help. Any deed of blood might have been done under the shadowy pines, unknown to any save the black vultures that floated aloft over the sierra.

Now that they had arrived so far upon their quest their lives were in their own hands.

That thought made them grave and quiet as they ate their beef and corn cakes, washed down with clear water from the stream.

"On the trail!" said Billy Cook at last, and the adventurers resumed their way, leading their horses, for the ground was still too rugged for riding.

Its ruggedness was increasing with every step.

The canyon narrowed, the high, rocky sides closing in, as it seemed, upon the adventurers, and pines nodding over their heads as they advanced down the stream.

The likeness of that narrow, shadowy canyon to a coffin had given rise to its name, a name of evil omen, as the youthful gold-seekers could not help thinking, as they tramped on in the gloom.

Billy Cook's face was growing very thoughtful. "Jake was keeping his eyes about him as they advanced, with suspicious glances. But it was not the scarred Californian he was thinking of now."

"Let's have another look at that there map, Frank," he said abruptly. Frank Richards handed him the buckskin map.

The ranchman bent his brows over it grimly, and then swept the canyon with his glance.

"I guess Bronze Bill had seed the bonanza when he drew this map!" he said. "He told us so," answered Frank.

"Correct! But I guess there's something amiss. Five miles from the Bar Coffin Canyon's marked; that's so. One mile on to the arroyo—which is the old Spanish word for a ravine. And there's the bonanza. But I guess I don't see that there arroyo."

"I was thinking of that," said Frank. "We've followed the canyon a good mile now."

"More!" said Billy Cook. "I don't suppose Bronze Bill had his distances very exact," remarked Beauclerc. "He would have to put them in by guesswork."

"Sure!" assented Billy Cook. "But I guess I don't see any arroyo at all, and there the canyon ends—blocked."

He jerked his thumb towards the rocks that closed in Coffin Canyon ahead. A hundred yards from where they had stopped the rocks closed in and met; there was no passage farther. Ahead of the adventurers, at a hundred yards distance, rose a wall of rugged rock, clustered with pines. Coffin Canyon was a cul-de-sac—there was no way out, save the way they had come, or by climbing five hundred feet of rocky wall.

The schoolboys looked round them, puzzled. They had taken the map on the faith of the dying rustler's word; they had never doubted it. Yet nothing was to be seen of the arroyo marked on the buckskin.

"Where does the water go?" asked Bob suddenly. "Look!"

Bob jumped on a high boulder, and followed the rippling stream with his eye. The water rippled on, and it was evident that it must have some outlet.

In the rocky wall of the canyon a great cleft opened, shrouded by pines, and it was into the cleft that the torrent disappeared. A dozen yards farther on the rocks closed over the cleft, and hid the flowing water.

Bob jumped down, looking dismayed. "I guess that won't guide us any farther!" he said. "It flows underground from here. I suppose it comes out again somewhere lower down the mountain."

"Oh, my hat!" said Frank. "And the arroyo—"

"I guess there isn't any arroyo!" said Billy Cook grimly. "I reckon Bronze Bill dreamed of the gold nuggets when he had had too much firewater at Cinnamon Bar!"

"Phew!" Frank Richards shook his head. "He can't be so!" he exclaimed. "He told us the skeleton of the greaser, Jose Juarez, lay on the spot where the nuggets were found. He confessed that he had shot Juarez. And Cabrera, too, he must believe in the bonanza. We've got to find it!"

"Where?" said Billy Cook, shrugging his shoulders. "I guess we've come hyer for nothing; you've had your holiday, and I calculate it's time to light out for home!"

Frank Richards shook his head again; but he was puzzled. The explorers had expected to find the arroyo opened from the canyon, but the rugged walls of rock and pine stretched on either side of them unbroken, save by the cleft where the stream disappeared into the mountain.

Unless the Golden Arroyo was the fevered imagine of a dream, where was it to be found?

"We're not giving it up," said Frank at last.

"I guess there's no choice," said Billy Cook, with a grin. "I never reckoned there was much in it. Cause why? This region has been prospected for years, and if the nuggets was there, some lucky galoot would have happened on them before now. It isn't like it was in the days of '49, with lucky strikes waitin' for a pilgrim round every corner."

"We're not giving in, I guess!" said Bob Lawless decidedly. "We'll camp here, Billy, till we find out what that pesky map means!"

"I guess it won't hurt us to camp!" smiled Billy Cook. "There's plenty of water, and fish in it somewhere, I reckon. And there's something for the hosses to crop. Camp's the word!"

The adventurers selected a sheltered spot by the stream, where the horses were staked out. The sun was sinking towards the far Pacific now, and the shadows were deepening in the canyon. The night wind rustled the pines with an incessant murmur.

Frank Richards left the camp, and moved up the stream, the buckskin map in his hand.

He had pinned his faith to the map, and, like his comrades, he had dreamed golden dreams of the arroyo where the skeleton of Jose Juarez lay, a ghastly finger-post to the treasure. He would not give up his faith while a hope remained.

He followed the stream till the towering rocks barred farther progress. From the cavern in the hill-side came a deep, hollow murmur from the stream as it poured into unknown depths. There was a continual dancing of white foam where it vanished from sight.

Frank studied the map with wrinkled brows; but it gave him no further clue. If the map told true, the Golden Arroyo opened out of Coffin Canyon, close by the end of the stream; and there was no opening to be seen in the walls of rock.

Once, no doubt, in past ages, the whole region had been the scene of volcanic action, which had tumbled the mighty rocks, and torn the mountain asunder where the torrent now disappeared into hidden channels. But that time was long past; there had been no change since Bronze Bill had crept up the canyon, stalking the swarthy Juarez to his bonanza—and to his doom.

A sudden thought flashed into Frank's mind as he stood watching the foam at the opening of the cavern.

"The river!" His eyes danced. The thought came to him like a revelation. What if the stream, after passing through the rocky barrier, flowed into the arroyo marked on the map? It had an outlet somewhere, farther down the mountain, Billy Cook supposed. But it was possible at least that the channel under the rocks was brief, and that the torrent found the sunlight again in the arroyo where Juarez had met his death.

Frank Richards turned to hurry back to the camp a hundred yards from where he stood, hidden by the great rocks from his sight.

The sudden movement saved his life, for, even as he turned, there rang out the sharp crack of a rifle, and a bullet spun the hat from his head.

"Help!" shouted Frank. A dozen yards from him three figures had risen into view—the three dusky Californians, Cabrera, with a bandaged head, in advance. It was Cabrera that had fired.

Evidently the rival gold-seekers had trailed the party to Coffin Canyon, and had been watching their opportunity.

Frank Richards' straying from his companions had given Cabrera the chance he wanted. To shoot down the schoolboy and rob him of the map, and flee before the others could arrive on the scene, was evidently the scarred ruffian's intention.

Frank stopped, breathing hard, as the trio of ruffians ran swiftly towards him over the rocks.

They were between him and the camp farther down the canyon, cutting him off from his friends. And even his rifle he had left at the camp when he followed the stream to its end. Save for his hunting-knife, he was unarmed, with his deadly foes closing in upon him.

"Help!" "Carambo! Shoot him down!" panted Cabrera. Crack, crack!

There was a shout from the distance. Frank's cry and the rifle-shots had given the alarm. But there was no time for his comrades to arrive to his aid.

Cabrera's companions had fired simultaneously; and Frank, acting upon instinct and without stopping to think, flung himself down upon the rocks by the water's edge.

The bullets whistled over him, and whizzed across the stream, to crash upon the rocks on the other side. "Carambo!"

But Cabrera was upon him now. Frank Richards scrambled to his knees, and as he did so the scarred Californian leaped upon him and grasped him.

"The map!" he panted. Frank did not reply. He struggled fiercely in the grip of the scarred ruffian on the slippery rocks splashed by the foam from the torrent. Both lost their footing on the uneven rock, and rolled over.

Cabrera's followers were springing to the aid of their leader, but they stopped suddenly, with breathless exclamations.

The struggling foes rolled from the slippery rock, and there was a mighty splash as they disappeared into the water. "Madre di Dios!" muttered Diaz. Splash!

There was a choking cry from Cabrera, choked by the waters that dashed over him.

Frank Richards, plunged under the stream, felt the savage grasp of the Californian relax. He rose to the surface, striking out for his life.

But in a moment more he knew that there was no hope. The rush of the stream had already swept him into the cavern.

A dozen yards from him, fighting with the water, he caught a glimpse of Carlos Cabrera, as the Californian was swept away.

For a moment he saw the scarred, swarthy face, pale with terror, and then it vanished in the stream—vanished under the foam-swept arch of rocks.

Frank Richards was a good swimmer, and he struggled hard as the current rushed him the way the scarred Californian had gone.

But he struggled in vain. In spite of his resistance he was swept on and on, and the gurgling of the stream where it flowed under the rocks was deafening in his ears.

There was a shouting on the bank and the ringing of firearms. Like one in the grip of a terrible dream Frank heard the voices of his chums calling to him:

"Frank! Frank!" The next moment the waters were over his head and he was swept away into the blackness. Crack, crack, crack!

Amid the rugged rocks of Coffin Canyon the two followers of Cabrera were fleeing for their lives—each of them with a wound. On the rocky verge of the stream Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclerc halted. Billy Cook stayed but to send a last ball after the fleeing Californians, and then he joined them breathlessly.

"Frank! Where's Frank?" Beauclerc picked up the hat, pierced by a bullet. It was the only sign that remained of Frank Richards—swept away by the foaming torrent into the valley of the shadow of death!

THE END.

"The Golden Arroyo!" By MARTIN CLIFFORD, is the title of Next Monday's Long, Complete Story of FRANK RICHARDS & Co. Make sure of your copy of the "BOYS' FRIEND."